



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 6, 2025

TO: The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: House Bill 1195, *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Membership, Transparency, Billing, and Planning (WSSC Transparency and Reform Act of 2025) MC/PG 105-25*

Support with Amendments

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 1195, *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Membership, Transparency, Billing, and Planning (WSSC Transparency and Reform Act of 2025) MC/PG 105-25*, as amended by the Montgomery County House Delegation. The amended bill includes a variety of provisions relating to membership, transparency, billing, and planning for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC Water), including provisions that:

- (1) require that one of the three commissioners appointed from Montgomery County be the Director of the Department of Environmental Protection;
- (2) require WSSC Water to develop a Long Range Comprehensive Financial Plan and to update it every five years;
- (3) require WSSC Water's searchable website to include: (i) any documents relating to a bond rating received from a major credit rating agency; (ii) data relating to the Refund Hearing Board, including number of cases filed, closed, granted, or denied and the amount of refund requested and granted in each case; and (iii) a copy of any stress testing completed for the Long Range Comprehensive Financial Plan;
- (4) require that the budget authorization for WSSC Water's Office of Inspector General (OIG) be approved independently without any involvement of WSSC Water staff;

- (5) require the OIG to undergo an external, independent peer review every three years to assess whether the OIG's quality control system is effectively designed and operating in compliance with generally accepted government accounting standards;
- (6) state the intent of the General Assembly to have WSSC Water bill on a fixed periodic basis, such as monthly or quarterly basis, without the use of estimated billing;
- (7) require WSSC Water to report each year on the total number of customers in the preceding year that reported bills exceeding the limits for high bill adjustments under WSSC Water's regulations;
- (8) require WSSC Water to appoint a representative to serve on the coordinating committee established in the 1984 Avenel Farm Development Master Plan Agreement;
- (9) require WSSC Water to report by November 1, 2025, on procedural changes that are being developed and finalized to enhance the customer engagement process for customers that receive high bills and to report by November 1, 2026, on the full implementation of those procedural changes;
- (10) require WSSC Water to work with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation and other stakeholders to assess the ad valorem taxes that would be necessary to support the Commission's debt;
- (11) require WSSC Water to hire a consultant to conduct, in consultation with the Department of Legislative Services (DLS), an independent evaluation of certain aspects of the efficiency and sustainability of WSSC Water, to be completed by October 1, 2027;
- (12) require WSSC Water's OIG, separate from the independent consultant's evaluation referenced in item (11), to conduct an evaluation of certain aspects of the efficiency and sustainability of WSSC Water and report its findings and recommendation to DLS by October 1, 2027; and
- (13) require DLS to review the OIG's report referenced in item (12) and report its findings by October 1, 2028.

I believe that the bill as amended by the Montgomery County House Delegation serves the public interest and respectfully request that the Environment and Transportation Committee vote favorable on the bill with those amendments.

cc: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee